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The Concept of God in *An Inquiry Into the Good*

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Nishida Kitaro describes his own work as an attempt to give a philosophical interpretation of Zen Buddhism, which he regards as a position which ‘truly considers life the grasp of reality’ (*Complete Works of Nishida Kitaro*, vol. 19, pp. 224-225). In this respect, Nishida’s philosophy can be seen as an attempt to understand the logical structure of immediate reality, i.e. reality as prior to conceptual abstraction; and the notion of pure experience, described in his first work *Zen no kenkyu* (*An Inquiry Into the Good*) as immediate experience prior to the dichotomy between subject and object, can be regarded as its foundation stone. Nevertheless, the concept of God is also one of the keynotes of Nishida’s philosophical development, playing a primary role in *Zen no kenkyu* as well as in his last work *Bashotekironri to Shukyotekiseikaikan* (*The Logic of Locus and the Religious Worldview*), not only as an object of religious concern, but also as a metaphysical concept relevant to the description of reality.

In this paper I try to analyze the concept of God in *Zen no kenkyu* as the ultimate foundation of the system of consciousness, which for Nishida constitutes reality. Ultimate reality is described by Nishida as God, an infinite consciousness which produces and contains all dichotomies and finite individuals through an act of self-determination and self-manifestation. The logical and ontological implications of this notion of an infinite consciousness and of its relation to our finite individual consciousnesses, particularly the aporiae it entails, can be seen as the starting point of Nishida’s later philosophical development.